



# THE USE OF CONCEPT CARTOONS AS A TEACHING STRATEGY: A THEORETICAL STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Akanksha Shukla<sup>1</sup> | Prof. Anjali Bajpai<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005, Uttar Pradesh, India.

## ABSTRACT

If there any colorful picture, image, cartoon, or simple sketch are printed or presented in our boring textbooks or during a boring lecture. Immediately we all become more attentive with enhanced interest and curiosity level towards those particular concepts. When we remember the characters' names in our childhood days comic books' then their actions and statements come into the mind in the visual form spontaneously, which helps us to recall the scene and content for a long time. Students desire to become doctors, engineers, teachers, scientists, musicians, players, actors, politicians, fashion designers and journalists etc. whatever they wish to be in their future, they must know that their chosen professions will have to serve the society's needs as they are the units of it and they have to interact with each and every unit of the society for their own survival too. For this purpose, Social science subject becomes so much crucial that it has been included right from the primary level to secondary level. For establishing a country's strong foundation upon democratic values like fraternity, liberty, equality and justice, it is indispensable for teaching-learning process to make aware it's students of political, economical, social, historical and cultural issues. Undoubtedly there is dire need of innovative strategies for teaching Social Science and recently concept cartoons have been proven very effective as teaching strategy in various subjects. In this article, we have to explore the possible outlines of some important dimensions of Social science subject where concept cartoons can be used as teaching strategy.

**KEYWORDS:** Concept Cartoons, Teaching Strategy, Social Science.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The basic terminology used in this particular manuscript is listed below:

### 1.1 Concept Cartoons:

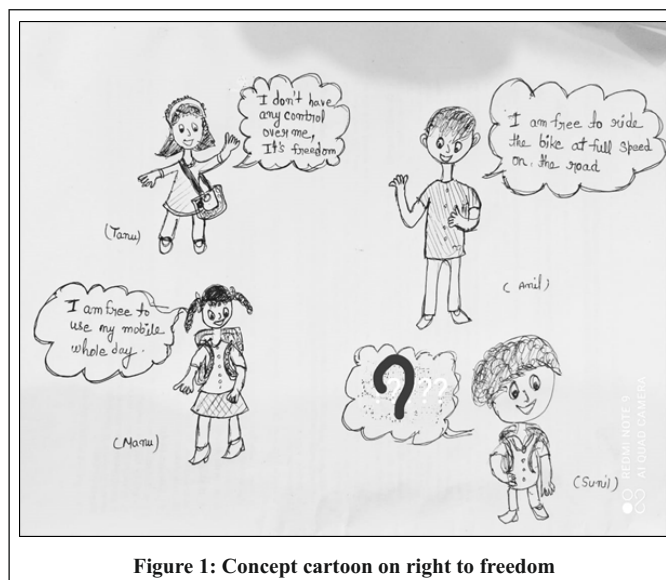
The credit for creating the first concept-cartoon goes to Brenda Keogh and Stuart Naylor (1991). Based on the results of research on the usefulness of cartoons for various dimensions of education, many improvements and developments have been made in the concept-cartoon.

In short, concept cartoons are visual devices that are created by proposing, discussing or thinking ideas on a topic, event or concept in the daily lives of three or more characters.

### 1.2 Key Features of Concept-Cartoons:

1. Concept - Cartoons are based on day-to-day situation.
2. Concept-Cartoons present scientifically acceptable alternative approaches for each situation as well as other alternative approaches.
3. In addition to the speech bubbles written in the cartoon, an empty statement bubble is also given, which encourages and motivates the students to find and think of alternative ideas to fill that given blank bubble.
4. The statements written in cartoon bubbles are in the language of the students, so that they can understand and use them easily.
5. All the alternative viewpoints given in the cartoon appear appropriate, so that the students are able to support their point of view and idea with less confidence because they find all the alternative perspectives to be correct and they get confused.
6. The facial expressions and utterance words in cartoons are not contextual cues, due to which the students have to think to find the answer.
7. The alternative perspectives presented in the cartoon are research based on the ideas of different ages of the students.

*Example:* Below an example of concept cartoon for Right to freedom at upper primary level is given. This concept cartoon is created by the author herself.



**Figure 1: Concept cartoon on right to freedom**

Howard Gardner's theory of visual special intelligence is relevant in context of concept cartoons as teaching strategies which emphasizes that the visualization is a key element in the mental processing by which we primarily think in images or pictures.

Accordingly, the use of Cartoons have been proven very effective in teaching – learning process because these are visual representation of the concepts through which students enjoy a learning environment, which stimulates them to think critically and creatively, when they can relate classroom instructions to tasks and experiences they encounter in their realities, they can learn better and achieve new skills.

### 1.3. Teaching Strategy:

Teaching is an interactive process aimed at achieving desired objectives in the classroom. This interactive process is done by the students and teacher. Whereas, strategy refers to such skillful arrangement, which can be done by the teacher in the room and the students to achieve their objectives and to bring about the desired change in the behavior of the students. In short, teaching strategy is that plan which emphasizes on teaching objectives, behavioral modifications, content, task analysis, learning experiences and background factors of learners.

### 1.4. Social Sciences:

Social science is integrated in the school curriculum through a combination of subjects like – History, Geography, Cultural Studies, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, etc. In this way all the aspects of

human life are interrelated and interdependent on each other so closely that nobody can live apart from it. Social science is a vital subject at upper primary level as it develops among children understanding of human relationships, social values and attitudes. Social science helps young learners to recognize the contemporary problems prevailing in society and prepares them to find out the solutions.

## 2. NEED OF USING CONCEPT CARTOONS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE:

In spite of being a significant subject for inculcating values and required life skills Social science subject is highly disliked subject by the students as they consider it a very monotonous and just information giving subject which has no utility for their career. In a survey of VI and XII grade students' comments indicated that social science was not perceived as a particularly enjoyable subject and also was not considered specially difficult. Along with it many students found social science contents boring, citing that information is too far removed from their experience, too detailed or too repetitious (Schug & Markc et. al., 1982). Not only do students perceive social science to be dull, but also fail to see the relevance of social science to their everyday lives (Schug, Todd and Beery, 1982). It is because the instructional methods used by the teacher do not engage and inspire students to learn social science. Similarly in another study it was found that many teachers continued to depend on textbooks and lectures as the main tool for teaching social science. Ahmad and Maryam (2016) concluded that mostly students had negative attitude towards social science subjects because they are dependent on their families. Their parents motivate them for those subjects who have greater high paying job opportunities in society i.e. pre-medical, engineering, biology, physics, in short all natural sciences. The students also reported that their teacher did not motivate them for social science subjects so that's why they had little or no knowledge about social sciences. They also did not know the scope of social sciences in future. All of these factors contribute to de-motivate the students for social science subjects and they will not get admission in social sciences subject in future education.

### 2.1. Concept cartoons as teaching strategy:

Concept cartoons are especially effective for "dread, monotonous and dull considered subjects. including Social Science, which is considered as boring and based on rote memory according to some students. Cartoons have the potential to promote thinking processes and discussion skills (Clark, 2000). In the same line Alaba (2007) found the result that the use of educational cartoons and comics have significantly enhance the creativity of the pupils when compare to those that did not use the creative teaching strategies. Thus the value of cartoon as teaching strategy cannot be denied.

### 2.2. Concept cartoons have the following advantages as teaching strategy in Social Science:

- **Attract attention of children as well as of adults:** These cartoons can be utilized as an effective tool to impart education from pre- primary level to higher levels of education as many researchers have proven. That is why concept cartoons are being used for teaching to medical, engineering and many more higher education pursuing students in order to create enjoyable environment and make concepts understand in proper manner. According to Statista, adults between the ages of 18 to 49 years contributed to more than 60% of people who watch Cartoon Network. Laughter is the best medicine and cartoons are a great source of laughter. Many studies have shown that cartoons also lower stress-related diseases in adults. A lecture may be informative, but after a while, the learners will feel the humdrum of the same manner of instruction in the classroom. However, by using cartoons, we invoke to the visual, as well as the auditory senses providing an effective environment for making learning easier.
- **Increases participation of students with low level confidence:** Concept cartoons can be so thoughts provoking that students are drawn into "sharing" in the dialogue by "waxing" one of the characters, giving rise to vibrant class exchanges. The class becomes interactive and student-centered as students are laboriously involved in their learning process. Many concepts in social science as fundamental rights and duties, inflation, governance, water crisis and environmental crisis and making students awaked for it are very abstract in nature. For this reason children are afraid to participate in class debates and are often silent. In this case it is observed by many researchers that cartoons make them engaged in discussion as they feel enjoyment in it. Along with it cartoon characters talks stimulate them for presenting their own point of views too because they connect themselves with the characters' conversations and actions. Concept cartoons can enhance learning and learners tend to spend longer time on the task to sustain their levels of interest and to interact confidently with their peers also. (Yin et al, 2016)
- **Develops communication skills During discussion of the concept cartoons:** Social science subject considered to be very lengthy and debating in nature. Many students complain that social science is a subject in which they have to memorize and write a lot. Actually this subject requires many thoughts of reflective level for the discussion which needs verbal presentation too. In this order Concept cartoons create a non-threatening environment for the students for putting their thoughts in front of the entire classroom, defending their view points and fostering productive argumentation.

In this way concept cartoons helps to develop communication skills and give voices to students without fearing that they are challenging anyone and they can be punished for it.

- **Helps to improve attitude towards Social Science:** As mentioned above that students have negative attitude towards Social Science and they do not find their future in studying it. Along with it they also affirm that there are very lengthy type of answers in it. So, In an experimental study conducted by Oruc & Teymuroglu (2011), the point was emphasized that cartoons are effective in improving the attitude of students towards social science and prevents the class from being monotonous also. Strategically utilities of the cartoons are also supported by the study conducted by Yin and Fitzgerald (2017). They found that critical thinking and performance was correlated with peer learning with concept cartoons. The results also revealed that cartoons are able to improve attitudes, increase productivity, creativity, and divergent thinking in Economics education.
- **Positive effect on achievement of students:** It is very crucial to know the achievement of students for determining the present level of learning and possible necessity for further improvement in teaching as well. In this regard Cartoons can be effective as visual strategy that helps to understand concepts clearly and concisely and thus it becomes easier to memorize and retain the concepts. Many researchers have also confirmed the positive effects of cartoons on the achievement in social science concepts. A strategy implemented based on the cartoons improves the achievement of students in Social Science of experimental group. (Srinivasalu, 2016).
- **Increases awareness of issues in Social Science:** Awareness means knowledge or perception of a situation or fact. In this regard there are many sensitive issues in the periphery of Social science subjects which directly or indirectly influence human life. For example Meena is cartoon character who educates and spread awareness about gender, health, child marriage demerits, and inequalities etc. This way concept cartoons can make aware students about social discrimination and environmental issues as well. Same kind of study was conducted by Rabbani and Amri (2017) with four grade students in order to investigate the effect of cartoon on the awareness of water issue in social science. From the study it was concluded that using cartoon increased the awareness of water issue among the students. In addition to this the researchers also observed a changed interaction pattern for those students who were considered as less active in class. Along with these results strong positive attitudes toward using the cartoons in social science was also revealed. Researchers have demonstrated that cartoons are engaging and supportive strategically useful tool by which students enjoy the lesson till the end of the class. Moreover cartoons make students more attentive and aware.
- **Cartoons positively enhance constructive learning, cooperative learning, and collaborative learning:** Wyk (2017) also conducted a survey on bachelor of education students through which it was pointed out those amongst peers in Economics classroom. The teachers in constructivist learning play the role of a guide and help students to connect their prior knowledge with the new information they are learning. In this way it is crucial that proper teaching strategy and materials are prepared and used for a meaningful learning to occur and for students to be actively involved in the learning process. One of these teaching strategy are cartoons. Keogh and Naylor (1999) had done a study on the evaluation of 'concept cartoons' in science in which they found highly positive responses of teachers and learners for concept cartoons.
- **Concept Cartoons can be used as assessment strategy in teaching:** According to Stephenson and Warwick (2002), concept cartoons can be utilized generally for formative assessment. Moreover, these tools provide opportunities for feedback in the classroom against alternative ideas in the learning process. (Dabell, 2008). Concept cartoons can be used for peer and self assessment strategy which is essential for encouraging students to be responsible for their learning and for following-up changes in their development. Actually concept cartoons were first used by Keogh and Naylor as an alternative assessment tool which was based on constructivism approach.
- **Concept Cartoons Enhance Interest:** It is very indispensable for obtaining learning outcomes that students show their interest in that particular subject. In context of Social science students are lacking in interest because teachers use chalk and talk teaching strategy. Only using lecture method without any enjoyable strategy decreases the interest of students. For getting rid of this problem funny and colorful with caption or without caption cartoons should be utilized as teaching strategy. The cartoon increases interest and intrinsic motivation and reduce boredom, academic stress and anxiety.

In short, Following are the benefits of using concept cartoons as teaching strategy in Social science:

1. Students desire an entertaining class in place of mere information delivery by a lecture. It can be achieved by using cartoons as strategy while teaching as concept cartoons are filled with humor.

2. Concept cartoons helps the teachers to attract the students' attention and help them to learn the various concepts of Social science by asking question about cartoon drawn. In addition, the students develop logical and critical thinking and participate in discussion with full confidence.
3. Children's attention span is really limited and can distract very easily in the class of Social science as it contains concepts which can be lengthy. So cartoons will help them to give the focus on reading for a long time. At the same time, it'll be help them to retain the concept also.
4. Using cartoons as teaching strategy can be charismatic while communicating with the students. Through this teachers become familiar with the back benchers and introvert students too and thus can help them to grow their personality.
5. Education with cartoon has not learning. Since cartoons are composed of different, gripping, images and symbols, they remain in the minds of objects for along time. As a result, it's easy to remember them. Knowledge learned.
6. Cartoons refine the students' faculties to remark. Students' perspectives for cartoons will be different and interpretations will be surface on the same subject. In addition to this case show the humorousness and diversity of ideas among students, group discussion and chancing the most accurate results together brings

### 3. CONCLUSION:

It's positive that cartoons have variety of uses. Cartoons can be used single-handedly, in duos, small groups and yea in large lecture classes. Multiplex investigators have been conducted in field of education from past days to present situation education because Cartoons are a wonderfully universal medium in enhancing teaching and knowledge. Visually, the impact of cartoons is instantly, no matter of age or background, are good to respond in some ways to the educational point being made. With the composite of words and caricatures or movie, it can attract attention and interest. Cartoons can also help the relationship between teachers and students as cartoons produce a light and antic mood. In interacting with the cartoons boosts, they are helping their own education and understanding while at the same time be encouraged to develop critical advanced order cognitive chops.

In Social science, as a matter of reality, using cartoons would clearly break the humdrum of Social science subject. There are many researchers who have conducted studies on concept cartoons in the field of Science subject. But there are very few researches in the field of Social science where concept cartoons are used as teaching strategy. It needs to be emphasized that the success of teaching does not only depend on the concept cartoons itself as a teaching strategy but it also depends on the quality of classroom interactions during the discussion and investigation phases of the teaching.

### REFERENCES:

- I. Alaba, S.O. (2007). The use of educational cartoons and comics in enhancing creativity in primary school pupils in Ile-ife, Osun State, Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Sciences Research*, 3(10), 913-920.
- II. Ahmed, U., & Maryam, S. (2016). Secondary School Students Attitude towards the Social Science Studies in Sargodha City, Pakistan. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*. doi:10.6007/IJARPE/V5-12/2093.
- III. Clark, C. (2000). Innovative strategy: Concept cartoons. *Instructional and learning strategies*, 12, 34-45.
- IV. Durualp, E. (2006). Use of Cartoon in Social science Education in Primary Education. Unpublished thesis. Ghazi University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Ankara.
- V. Doring, A. (2002). Effective Teaching and Learning at University: The Use of Cartoons as a Teaching and Learning Strategy. Australian Catholic University.
- VI. Oruc, S. & Teymuroglu, B. (2011). The effects of using cartoon in teaching social sciences on attitudes of students against to social science course. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 15:3211-3215.
- VII. Keogh, B., & Naylor, S. (1996). Teaching and Learning in Science: A New Perspective. Paper presented at the BERA Conference, Lancaster, September 1996.
- VIII. Khalid, H., Meerah, T.S. and Halim, L. (2010). Teachers' Perception towards Usage of Cartoon in Teaching and Learning Physics. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 7(C) (2010) 538-545.
- IX. Junhasavasdikul, Sukhato, Srisangkaew, Ampornpant, Anothaisintawee and Dellow (2017). Cartoon versus traditional self-study handouts for medical students: Cartoon randomized controlled trial. *Medical Teacher*, Vol. 39, No. 8, 836-843 <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2017.1324137>
- X. Sengul, S. and Dereli, Mehtap. (2013). The Effect of Learning Integers Using Cartoons on 7th Grade Students' Attitude to Mathematics. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice* - 13(4) • 2526-2534. DOI: 10.12738/estp.2013.4.1486
- XI. Srinivasalu, G.N. (2016). Using Cartoons As Effective Tools In Teaching-Learning Process of Social Sciences. *Scholarly Research Journal For Interdisciplinary Studies*. ISSN2278-8808.
- XII. Schug, M. C., Todd, R.J., & Beery, R. (1982). Why Kids Don't Like Social Studies. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED224765.pdf>

- XIII. Wyk, M.M.V. (2017). The Use of Cartoons as a Teaching Tool to Enhance Student Learning in Economics Education. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 26, (2).
- XIV. Rabbani, A. & Amir, I. (2017). The Effect of Using Cartoons on Developing Omani Grade 4 Students' Awareness of Water Issues and their Attitudes towards Using them in Teaching Social Studies. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*. 8(1), 35-46.
- XV. Stephenson, P. & Warwick, P. (2002). Using concept cartoons to support progression in students' understanding of light. *Physics education*. 37, 135.
- XVI. Khoo, Y. & Fitzgerald, R. N. (2017). Peer Learning With Concept Cartoons Enhance Critical Thinking And Performance In Secondary School Economics. *Journal of Economics and Economic Education Research* 18(1):1-13.